



Acton Historic District Commission

472 Main Street
Acton, MA. 01720

July 14, 2008

By Hand Delivery

Mr. Frank Ramsbottom
Interim Building Commissioner
Town of Acton
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720

, Dear Mr. Ramsbottom,

The Acton Historic District Commission (HDC) is currently reviewing various projects in the South Acton Historic District Area (SAHDA), which overlaps the South Acton Village (SAV) zoning area. Residential is the sole use group proposed for these projects.

The Town of Acton Local Historic District Bylaw, Chapter P, states in the Criteria for Determinations, paragraph 8.2 that:

“In the case of new CONSTRUCTION or additions to existing BUILDINGS or STRUCTURES, the COMMISSION shall consider the appropriateness of the scale, shape and proportion of the BUILDINGS or STRUCTURE both in relation to the land area upon which the BUILDING or STRUCTURE is situated and in relation to BUILDINGS and STRUCTURES in the vicinity.”

However, the same paragraph of the Bylaw states the HDC “shall not further limit the maximum floor area ratio and height of a building as defined and permitted in the Acton Zoning Bylaw.”

As part of the HDC’s work in accordance with the above paragraph, a question has arisen concerning the applicable floor area ratio (FAR). The Table of Standard Dimensional Regulations on page 57 of the Town of Acton Zoning Bylaw of May 10, 2007 notes under the Maximum Floor Area Ratio for SAV that the FAR is .20. However, the table contains a reference to note (13) on page 58. This note states that, “The maximum

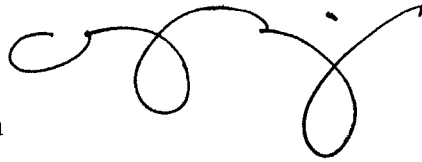
Floor Area Ratio may be increased to .40, **provided that** for every square foot of **non-residential** NET FLOOR AREA **built** above FAR .20 an **equal amount** or more of habitable residential NET FLOOR AREA is **provided simultaneously**, and set aside for exclusive residential USE. (Emphasis added).

Needless to say, the FAR ratio, which as you know is an important factor in both lot coverage and building scale, can have a profound effect on area historical character. Therefore, please advise us as to which is the applicable FAR (.40 or .20) for projects in the SAV proposing 100 percent residential usage.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,,

Brian Bendig
HDC Chairman

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Cc: Roland Bartl, Planning Director (by hand delivery) ✓